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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GCC](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: GCC FOREIGN MINISTERS PREPARE FOR UPCOMING SUMMIT

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Michael A. Ratney,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Foreign Ministers of the GCC member states met in Doha November 11 to discuss the agenda for the heads of state summit, scheduled to take place in Doha December 3-4. Omani DCM Salim Abdulla Al-Alawi told Charge and P/E Chief November 14 that it appeared certain King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia would attend the summit. Otherwise, Al-Alawi observed that Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal would not have represented the Kingdom at the November 11 preparatory meeting. Bahraini First Secretary Ibrahim Ahmed Mubarak Al-Ameeri, also present for the discussion, agreed with Al-Alawi's analysis.

¶2. (C) Talk on the diplomatic circuit in Doha is that King Abdullah will travel to Doha for the summit and announce the return of a Saudi ambassador to Qatar. Saud Abukishk, a long-time businessman in Qatar who was close friends with the previous Saudi ambassador, told P/E Chief in late October that he believed the posting of a Saudi ambassador would occur by year's end. Al-Hayat reporter Mohamed Mekki, who has exercised his profession in Doha for about a decade, told P/E Chief at Saudi national day in October that confidential sources had told him King Abdullah wanted to signal a thaw in bilateral relations by filling the vacancy. There has been no Saudi ambassador to Qatar since 2002. Riyadh's decision to withdraw its ambassador occurred at a period of time when senior Saudi officials perceived that Al-Jazeera's coverage of Saudi Arabia was overly critical.

¶3. (C) Al-Alawi and Al-Ameeri, asked for their insights into the agenda for the December summit, indicated that many of the key decisions on the agenda were postponed until the Foreign Ministers' next preparatory meeting, December 1-2, immediately prior to the meeting of heads of state. Both diplomats said it was certain that Iran, Iraq and the Palestinian issue would be on the agenda. Less clear were the "lesser issues" the GCC heads of state would discuss in Doha. In their view, the most problematic major agenda item would be Iran. Al-Alawi hinted that the Foreign Ministers in their November 11 meeting agreed only on one issue on Iran: to take up the Iranian question again at their December meeting. Key to their next discussion, according to Al-Alawi, would be the upcoming IAEA report, which in his view would likely define the parameters of the December 3-4 discussions in Doha.

RATNEY